

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments, and the following remarks.

The Examiner has objected to claims 22 and 23. Claims 22 and 23 have been amended to overcome this objection.

In addition, the Examiner has rejected Claims 1-10, 19,21-23 and 25-27 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erras et al (DE 4416 504), references made to US 5,811,750, as modified by Caprioglio in view of Nishimura (JP 05192774 as cited by applicant) and Suita (US 2001/0045413).

It is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 19, and 21 include the following features not shown in the above cited references:

a pressure element arranged in the region of an electrode cap of the at least one electrode;

a spacer coupled to said pressure element, said spacer configured to selectively space said strip from said electrode, wherein said pressure element and said spacer comprise at least one guiding groove for guiding said strip around said at least one electrode.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the above references disclose the features claimed by claims 1, 19, and 21. For example, the examiner states: *Erras et al* as modified by

Caprioglio fails to teach: The pressure element and spacer.

The Examiner attempts to remedy this shortcoming by presenting *Suita*, and states:

Suita teaches: Regarding Claims 22-23: Fig 3a shows a sensor for detecting pressure and a spacer between the sensor in the region of the electrode. See Paragraph [0073]. In view of the teachings of Suita it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include with the teachings of Erras as modified by Caprioglio the pressure sensor and space since Suita teaches a pressure sensor and spacer in the region of the electrode for detecting a pressing force imposed on the welding tip.

It is respectfully submitted that paragraph 73 states:

As illustrated in FIG. 1, the welding gun 1 includes a moving side portion 10 including a moving side welding tip 11 and a driving device 12 for driving the moving side welding tip 11, and a fixed side portion 20 including a fixed side welding tip 21 and an arm 22 supporting the fixed side welding tip 21.

It is respectfully submitted that *Suita* does not teach the pressure element and the spacer as claimed in claims 1, 19 and 21. The pressure element and spacer are configured to protect the electrode so that the service life is substantially increased.

Suita does not show a strip for the protection of the electrodes. Therefore, this document cannot make obvious a construction by which the protection strip can be lifted off the electrode cap during the displacement or transportation of the protection strip as is claimed in claims 25-27 as well.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 19, and 21 are patentable over the above cited documents taken either singularly or in combination. The remaining dependent

claims depend from either claims 1, 19, or 21. Therefore, early allowance of the remaining claims is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 1, 19 and 21 remain in the application. Claims 1, 19, 21, 22 and 23 have been amended. Claims 11-18, 20 and 24 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1-10, 19, 21, 22-23, and 25-29 remain in the application. Support for claims 28 and 29 are found in the specification on page 7 lines 25-28. Early allowance of the remaining claims is respectfully requested. This amendment is being filed with a RCE. If any additional fee is due the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Collard & Roe, P.C.'s deposit account 03-2468 for any additional necessary fee.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: RCE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being electronically filed in the United States Patent and Trademark Office on August 25, 2010.

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